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ABSTRACT

Microcomputers are becoming increasingly available in education, especially in secondary education. It is estimated that in 1980, 50 percent of secondary schools had at least one microcomputer or computer terminal available. Within 3 years, there may be 400,000 microcomputers in secondary schools and 50,000 secondary teachers with computing as their main subject. Sales may total $145 million. Microcomputers can be incorporated into marketing education in five major ways: (1) for computer assisted instruction (such as marketing simulations, sales simulations, case studies, and remedial mathematics); (2) as an occupational tool (such as in inventory control used on a job); (3) to simplify record keeping for Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) chapters; (4) to help students choose marketing occupations through guidance counseling; and (5) in computer managed instruction. Teacher educators should learn all they can about the use of computers to be able to prepare their student teachers to use them with classes. Ways they can gain knowledge are through workshops and literature, by participating in field studies of manufacturers, and through classes conducted by manufacturers. Although little software is suitable for marketing education at present, many more application programs probably will be available soon. Teacher educators should help their student teachers learn how to judge the suitability of such software. (KC)

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MICROCOMPUTERS IN MARKETING EDUCATION

A Presentation Given To Marketing Teacher Educators At The

American Vocational Conference

St. Louis, Missouri

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MICROCOMPUTERS IN MARKETING EDUCATION

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St. Louis, Missouri-1982

There are four topics that I would like to talk with you about today. They are:

1. the status and future of microcomputers in education;
2. the uses of microcomputers in marketing education;
3. how we can train teachers and ourselves to learn about microcomputers; and
4. software availability.

STATUS AND FUTURE OF MICROCOMPUTERS IN EDUCATION

In 1980, of the nation's 15,000 school districts, 45% provided students with access to at least one microcomputer or computer terminal (National Center for Educational Statistics, Oct. 1980). Eighteen percent of the school districts who did not offer instructional computing, plan to do so in three years. Twenty-two thousand public schools buildings had at least one micro or computer terminal available. These figures represent 50% of secondary schools and 14% of elementary schools. Also, in 1980 a Market Data Retrieval survey shows school sales will increase from 35 million to 145 million in the next three years (Market Data Retrieval is a market research firm in Westport, Conn.).

In addition to the growing numbers of microcomputers in schools, many other events are happening. Educational journals are packed with microcomputer articles. Two years ago this was not the case. There have been workshops conducted all over the country. This summer I worked with IBM and conducted 46 telephone surveys with head state supervisors of business and office education.

It was unbelievable the amount of microcomputer inservice activity that has been happening; and there were future plans for even more extensive and intensive training. Almost every newspaper and magazine has numerous advertisements on microcomputers and software. Computer vendors are bombarding the schools and promising a revitalization in teaching. At almost every conference, such as this one, there are sessions on microcomputers. Many conferences have micros as the central focus. Teachers and administrators are crying for in-service training and information about what hardware and software to purchase.

That breify describes the present state of the art. Is this a temporary status or does the future promise more of the same?

Luehrmann, a leader in microcomputer education, predicts that within three years the average secondary school will have a lab or classroom with at least 16 microcomputers. There will be 400,000 microcomputers in junior and secondary schools and there will be 50,000 secondary teachers with computing as their main subject.

And, as mentioned before, Market Data Retrieval estimates that by 1985, $145 millions will be spent in school sales. The Educational board for the association for computing machinery projects that in five years every student will have some instruction on the computer.

It is also predicted that computer jobs will grow faster than any other occupation in the next decade. Computers are in nearly every sector of society, and most certainly in the marketing world. Now that the micro is on the market, small businesses can afford to benefit from the capabilities of a computer. The microcomputer could become as popular as the cash register and in some cases may even take its place.

This is a new trend in marketing businesses. But, what are we doing about it in regard to training future marketing employees? Lets take a look at some

ways we can incorporate the use of the microcomputer into our marketing education programs.

WAYS TO USE MICROCOMPUTERS IN MARKETING EDUCATION

Currently, there are five very important ways that we can incorporate the use of microcomputers in marketing education. They are:

1. CAI-computer assisted instruction;
2. occupational tool;
3. DECA-Distributive Education Clubs of America;
4. guidance; and
5. CMI-computer managed instruction.

I would like to talk about each of these in more depth.

CAI-Computer Assisted Instruction. CAI provides a high degree of student motivation. Students are very interested in interacting with the computer.

I believe that one of the most important uses of CAI that we will have in marketing education will be simulations. For example, presently we have Gregg/McGraw-Hill's "Sandwich Shop," and "Profit and Loss," simulations; the lemonade stand, and CHIPS. These programs offer to students the opportunities to make decisions and to obtain results.

Microcomputer programs would be excellent for remediation. Instead of spending time teaching students to do math that they should already know, we can give them tutorial and drill-and-practice programs that will help them learn these concepts.

Presently, we have very little available to us in software. We need to explore other areas for materials that may be of value in marketing education. In addition, we need to think in terms of developing software that could provide such activities as:

1. sales simulations that would allow the students to input conditions and obtain purchasing suggestions to provide to customers;
2. human relations case studies would offer students opportunities to make decisions and be provided with the consequences of those decisions;
3. pre-employment interview simulations would allow students to interact with a computer prior to an actual interview; and
4. simulations could help the students to learn inventory control.

The possibilities for the use of the microcomputer are limited only by our imagination. I think of such uses as; tutorials in marketing math, business communications, pricing, developing marketing plans, scheduling employees, and processing orders. We need to go through our curriculum and be creative with the kinds of activities that could be learned through this fantastic instructional tool and not waste the potential on activities that can be accomplished with less cost from a workbook. For example, activities such as some types of drill and practice.

Occupational Tool. The most important use of the microcomputer in vocational education is to train vocational students to use the micro as a tool in their jobs. We need to be training our students to use the actual programs that they will be using in marketing businesses. The best approach that we can possibly take is to use an existing business program and develop a simulation to learn to use the program. Or, if available; an excellent place to learn to use programs such as inventory control would be in the school store. The school store can be used as a model to train secondary, postsecondary and adult students to use the microcomputer in small businesses. Business programs such as the inventory control program not only help the students learn how to use the microcomputer to perform functions, but I believe they help students to better learn concepts that are associated with the functions. Students have the opportunity

to actually perform tasks such as keying in sales; checking items in stock; and obtaining reports such as inventory checklists, inventory value reports, inventory turnover reports, invoices, purchase orders, and packing slips. As microcomputers become more prominent in small businesses (and they certainly will) it will become necessary for marketing employees to be able to perform these tasks on the microcomputer.

DECA. DECA is the third area that the microcomputer will have great impact in the marketing education program. Soon, if not already, we will see the competitive events being managed by the microcomputer. Events will be developed that will allow students to take tests and immediately be scored. Also, simulation events will allow students to interact with the computer, thus cutting down on personnel needed to conduct and judge events. We may even see events that will involve using the microcomputer as an occupational tool. On the local level, students can use word processing programs to develop projects for written events. If something needs to be changed it is a matter of moving things around instead of retyping pages. Statistical packages will allow students to input marketing research data and obtain calculated results. Word processing programs are excellent for keeping chapter records and writing all kinds of documents and letters that may need only slight changes the following year. Keeping fund raising projects on programs such as Visicalc allows the teacher-coordinator to train students to use a financial program that may be used in the business setting.

Guidance. The microcomputer will provide an excellent vehicle for students to explore marketing careers. We need to have information about available marketing careers stored on diskettes for easy access and storage. There are programs such as Micro-computer Evaluation and Screening Assessment (MESA) that will measure students' aptitude and interests for occupational areas and match

the students' profiles with jobs in the dictionary of occupational titles. We could develop a similar type of program that is designed specifically to match students aptitudes and interests with marketing areas and more specifically jobs within those areas.

Computer Managed Instruction. Finally at last, we have a tool that is going to save a tremendous amount of time for the teacher instead of taking more time. The computer can be used for several tasks such as instructional planning, managing instruction, keeping attendance, writing letters to outside groups, keeping minutes of DECA and advisory board meetings, and maintaining training plans

A word processing program can be a valuable asset in relation to developing course outlines, lesson plans, handouts, transparencies, and test items. If you have changes the next time that you want to use any of these items, it is just a matter of editing instead of an entire rewrite. A new printout can be obtained and copies made, if needed, from the printout. The word processing program can be valuable for keeping minutes of meetings; sending letters to parents, advisory members, students, and employers; and developing lesson plans. As with the instructional materials, changes are easy to make. For instance, you can change a date on a letter from one year to the next or you can add or delete tasks on training plans. There are programs available that will keep student records such as attendance, grades, and other information.

TRAINING TEACHERS AND OURSELVES TO LEARN ABOUT THE MICRO

Learning about the microcomputer can appear to be an overwhelming task. But, the best way to learn is to start exposing yourself and teachers to the environment of microcomputers. I suggest that you start by reviewing microcomputer literature. When you see an article on micros, read it. Also, pay attention to advertisements. Subscribe to a journal or two on microcomputers

such as The Computing Teacher or Personal Computer Age. Reviewing articles will allow you to become familiar with the terminology as well as keep you up-to-date.

There are endless workshops, conferences, and courses being conducted all over the nation. Try to attend some of these conferences. A great deal of the conferences are centered around micros or at least there are several sessions that deal with this technology. You may consider enrolling in a course or workshop or make arrangements to set one up and, until you are qualified to teach it, get someone else to do it. Microcomputer interest groups are forming everywhere. Join one of these groups. Don't feel intimidated, there are other people there who don't know anymore than you and it is an excellent way to learn from others who have a great deal of experience with micros.

A second way to learn about micros is to contact microcomputer vendors. Many vendors are willing to come into your classes to give presentations. Often, they will loan you equipment for demonstration purposes or even courses. You can go to the microcomputer stores and shop around and ask questions. Several vendors, such as Radio Shack, offer workshops in their training centers. In addition to the information and assistance that you can obtain from vendors, there are several microcomputer corporations who have grants programs which allow you to obtain equipment and software for educational purposes. Corporations such as Tandy Corporation (Radio Shack) and Apple.

Begin using available simulations and then make your own. There are a few simulations available to us and there will be more in the future. However, most of the simulations that I have mentioned before are CAI types of activities; and in vocational education, we should be training students to use the actual programs that they will be using in their jobs. Therefore, I suggest that we take actual business programs and develop business activities that will allow

students to learn to use programs that apply to their future and present jobs. The school store, or a simulated school store, is an excellent place to teach students to use business packages such as inventory control. For example, this Spring in my Merchandise Control and Buying class, I have a teaching-learning grant to implement the use of a microcomputer inventory control program. We are using the stock from an actual school store and High Technology's inventory control program for Apple along with business activities to train the teacher-education students to learn to use the program so that they in turn can train their future students.

Since the microcomputer is not only an occupational tool but also a method of teaching, we need to incorporate this new method into our teacher-education methods classes. If your university has a microcomputer lab, you may take your students to the lab and show them the various types of CAI programs. If you have no lab, but have access to a micro, perhaps you can demonstrate the various programs that might have some value to them in their teaching. An additional option would be to call in textbook representatives and have them present the programs that they have available and discuss how they would fit into the marketing education curriculum. Also, I suggest that you use the resources that you have on campus. If computer literacy courses are offered, advise your students to take them. Call on another professor, who has expertise other than your own, to come into your class as a quest speaker.

In order to determine what microcomputer functions should be learned by students who are going into or who are in marketing jobs, it would be beneficial for you to conduct a business survey in areas for which you are training marketing employees in your state. As a first step in this direction, at Virginia Tech, we conducted a survey of small businesses in the Roanoke area to determine what functions personnel perform in marketing businesses that could be performed on

the microcomputer. We surveyed the businesses by three occupational categories: food marketing, hospitality and recreation, and apparel and accessories. Surveys such as this can give you an idea as to what you should be teaching students who are seeking careers in a particular industry and information such as this will be a necessity for curriculum development in this area. We would be glad to share the instrument that we developed for this purpose, if you will send a written request.

A sixth way to learn about the microcomputer environment and to help the teachers is to determine what the teachers in your state want and need to learn about microcomputers. You may consider conducting a survey to determine what they would like to learn. This information will assist you to develop courses and inservice training sessions. I suggest that you work with your state department of education to pursue the types of activities that we need to conduct in order to bring the preservice and inservice teachers up-to-date and to provide the curriculum that is needed in our marketing education programs.

The last method of learning about micros, which certainly does not exhaust the methods, is to work with publishing companies and software developers to field test materials. As more software materials are being developed, there will be a greater demand for field testers. Write to the publishers to volunteer to do field testing. not only is this a good way to learn, at no cost, about what will be available, but you are often given the final product for being involved in the field test.

The last point that I would like to briefly discuss is availability and evaluation of software. There is a lot of software floating around, but presently very little is available for marketing education. I have mentioned a few programs in this presentation, but I predict that in the near future there will be an abundance specifically developed, both by amatuers and professionals, for marketing

education or that can be adapted for our programs. As teacher educators, and as with all other curriculum, we need to make sure the availability is there. As with all educational materials, there is some question as to the quality of a great deal of the software. A third task that we have in addition to training teachers and making software available, is to make sure the quality of the software is what we want to see in our marketing education classrooms. We must make sure that teachers have the ability to evaluate and sort out that desired quality.

Ending Comments

This Christmas, the microcomputer will be the most popular machine Christmas present. It is predicted that over 2,000,000 micros will be sold for Christmas gifts.

A study from the University of Southern California provided the projection that by the end of the decade, half of the homes in the United States will have a personal computer system that can act as a cooking consultant, financial planner, teacher, and a plaything (Capron & Williams 1982-PDK Fastback 179).

Where are we going to be in marketing education by the end of the decade?